

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

TWO NEW OWLS, A SWIFT AND A POORWILL FROM
MEXICO¹

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Since the description by Griscom (Amer. Mus. Nov. No. 438, Dec. 15, 1930) of *Cryptoglaux rostrata* from Guatemala, the number of specimens of the Saw Whet Owl recorded from Mexico has been doubled by the securing of four individuals for the Moore collection and the locating of a fifth in the Museo Nacional de Historia Natural in Mexico City, a bird in immature plumage. The tag on the last records its capture at Jalapa, Veracruz. The ones in the Moore collection consist of the following: an adult male from Rancho Enmedio, Guanajuato, 6,000 feet altitude, Jan. 18, 1939 with sex organs considerably enlarged; an adult female from Puerto Lengua de Vaca 47 miles west of Toluca, State of Mexico, 9,350 feet altitude, Oct. 28, 1941; a male, in typical immature plumage with sex organs greatly enlarged, from a garden in Mexico City, Feb. 19, 1942; and a peculiar male from Volcán Tacaná, Chiapas, 3,000 meters altitude, April 14, 1943, with sex organs somewhat enlarged. Although the two adults show a slight buffiness on the flanks, this may be a remnant of the immature plumage and they are deemed to be true *acadicus acadicus*, as are the first and fourth bird mentioned above. The same is true of the Los Masos, Jalisco, individual in the American Museum of Natural History.

The Chiapas specimen is obviously a different form, intermediate, except for one character, between *acadicus* of the United States and the tropical *rostratus* of Guatemala. It is herewith described:

***Aegolius ridgwayi tacanensis*, subsp. nov.**

Tacaná Saw Whet Owl

Type.—Male, number 37459, collection of Robert T. Moore; Volcán Tacaná, Chiapas, Mexico; altitude 3000 meters; April 14, 1943; sex organs slightly enlarged; collected by Mario del Toro Avilés.

¹A contribution from the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California.

Subspecific characters.—Nearest in its most important characters to *Aegolius ridgwayi rostratus* Griscom and, like it, differing from true *acadicus* in having (1) the toes partly bare; (2) the wings and tail without white spots or bars or with only vestigial traces; (3) the suborbital region browner; and (4) the under wing coverts not white, it also differs from *rostratus* in having (A) a more pointed wing; (B) a smaller bill and shorter culmen; (C) buff rather than wood-brown under wing coverts; and (D) very short buffy streaks on forehead, instead of none in *rostratus*, or long white ones in *acadicus*. In addition, the brown and white streaks on the ruff of *acadicus* are replaced by a conspicuous buffy band, each feather margined by brown, producing a marbled effect, the same being bordered anteriorly by white.

Range.—Known only from one specimen, the type, taken in the Temperature Zone at an altitude of about 10,000 ft. on the Mexican side of the boundary with Guatemala.

Measurements in millimeters.—Wing 136.2, Tail 59, Culmen from cere 12.4.

Specimens examined.—*acadicus*: 73 specs. from Canada and the United States, all in the Museum of Comparative Zoology; these include 6 immatures, also 2 immatures marked "*brooksi*." In addition the 5 specimens from Mexico, mentioned above, and 4 from the U. S. in the Moore Collection; also the 1 in the Museo Nacional of Mexico City. Finally all specimens in the American Museum of Natural History, the Biological Survey Collection and the United States National Museum, including the type of *ridgwayi*. I have not inspected the type of *rostratus*, but Griscom, the describer, who has inspected the type of *tacanensis*, assures me the latter is distinctly different in the characters given.

Remarks.—From the above I do not jump to the conclusion that *acadicus*, *tacanensis*, *rostratus* and *ridgwayi* are all conspecific, although this may be true, because I feel, as Peters (Birds of the World, 4, 174, footnote 1) has expressed it, that until it is definitely known that all have an adult plumage, it is wiser to maintain two specific entities. The discovery of a high temperature form of the *acadicus*—*ridgwayi* group as far south as the Guatemalan border does not militate against Griscom's theory that the tropical forms of this group may not have an adult plumage. *Tacanensis* is not a tropical form. On the other hand, if this peculiar plumage of the type proves to be its adult plumage and that it has an as yet undiscovered immature plumage, then such evidence, coupled with the intermediate characters of this type may force the conclusion that it is the hitherto missing link between the temperate *acadicus* and the tropical *rostratus*.

The reasons for conceiving that the plumage of the type of *tacanensis* may be nearly adult are as follows: the upper parts are not the dark Vandyke Brown² that immatures of *acadicus* show, but the lighter Prouts Brown of the adults; the sides of the face and anterior underparts also resemble an adult plumage as do the whitish legs, toes and under tail coverts. Only the buffy posterior underparts can be regarded as evidence of immaturity. The fact that the median rectrices are still in their sheaths in an April bird seems to indicate this individual was

²Names of colors, when capitalized, are taken from Ridgway's Color Standard and Nomenclature, 1912.

born in the previous year, for often late fall specimens of *acadicus* possess typical immature plumage throughout, as this bird does not.

My thanks are gratefully offered to the authorities of the American Museum of Natural History and the Biological Survey, and particularly to Ludlow Griscom of the Museum of Comparative Zoology and to Herbert Friedmann of the United States National Museum for unusual courtesies.

In June of 1945, on my return from a zoological trip to Chiapas, I happened to visit a small taxidermical shop in Mexico City at the invitation of Senor Abraham Ramirez, who had collected for me on an expedition to Presidio, Veracruz in 1942. Almost hidden on a top shelf a peculiar bird with swallow-like tail and white throat caught my attention. As I previously had never seen one like it, I purchased it and obtained minute details of its capture in Presidio by Senor Ramirez. It proved to represent an extraordinary extension of range of a genus, not hitherto recorded from Mexico. I herewith describe it as a new subspecies:

***Panyptila cayennensis veraecrucis* subsp. nov.**

Veracruz Panyptila

Type.—Male adult, number 45544, collection of Robert T. Moore; Presido, Veracruz, Mexico; about 500 ft. altitude; June 1943; collected by Abraham Ramirez.

Subspecific characters.—Nearest to *Panyptila cayennensis cayennensis* (Gmelin) of Central America, but differs in having both wing and tail about 10% larger. It differs much more from its geographically nearer relative, *Panyptila sancti-hieronymi* Salvin, of Guatemala, which although almost identical in coloration, is a huge bird relatively, almost twice its size.

Range.—Known only from the type, taken in the Tropical Zone of Veracruz at Persidio.

Measurements in millimeters.—male type—Wing 126.8, Tail 63., Exposed Culmen 4.6. Average measurements of 9 *cayennensis* males from Nicaragua, Panama and Trinidad—W. 117.1, T. 55.8.

Specimens examined.—*cayennensis*: 6 males and 10 females from Canal Zone, Panama, in M.C.Z.; 1 spec. from Trinidad and 4 from S. America in Am. Mus. of N. H.; 1 spec. from Trinidad and 4 from Rio Escondido, Nicaragua, in U. S. Nat. Mus.; 1 spec. from Catacamas, Honduras; *sancti-hieronymi*: 1 spec. from Guatemala in U. S. Nat. Mus.; *veraecrucis*: the Type.

Remarks.—Previous to the discovery of *veraecrucis* in Mexico, the most northern point from which this species had been recorded was Catacamas, Honduras. Apparently from that locality south through Central America it is nowhere common, except locally at its nesting sites, but it has been collected at various localities in South America and about the locks of the Panama Canal Zone it has been almost common at times, it having been found breeding there on July 23, 1932 by J. Greenway, Jr. The great extension of the range of the species northward by the present discovery reveals a surprisingly irregular

distribution, for it never has been taken in the vast area between Honduras and Veraacruz, and yet its huge relative, *sancti-hieronymi*, nearly twice its size and almost identical in coloration, is found in this very gap, apparently the lone representative of the genus in Guatemala, where it seems to be extremely rare, if its infrequent capture is any criterion. Because of the enormous disparity in size of this last species it seems best to follow the custom of the past and not treat it as conspecific with *cayennensis*, but if this is the correct disposition of it, we should expect someday to find a race of *cayennensis* in Guatemala.

One of the surprising discoveries by Mario del Toro Avilés has been two specimens related to *Glaucidium m. rarum* of Panama. It is here-with described:

Glaucidium minutissimum occultum subsp. nov.

Oaxaca Pygmy Owl

Type.—Female adult in intermediate phase, number 33803, collection of Robert T. Moore; Moctum (Mt. Zempoaltepec), Oaxaca, Mexico; September 10, 1941; collected by Mario del Toro Avilés.

Subspecific characters.—Nearest to the intermediate phase of *Glaucidium minutissimum rarum* Griscom of Panama but differs in having (1) white dots on pileum smaller and much less frequent; (2) nuchal band with more extensive black and white, extending completely across the nape; (3) white band from chin extending posteriorly below the sub-orbital area to the nuchal band—more prominent; (4) legs white to buff, instead of cinnamon. It differs from *G. m. griseiceps* in same characters, but to greater degree; differs from intermediate phases of *palmarum* and *oberholseri* in characters (1) and (2) above; in addition (A) it has only three tail-bars instead of four and the tail is shorter; (B) is much darker throughout; and (C) the streaking below is heavier. No comparable phase of *griscomi* has been collected, but since its gray phase is paler and grayer than either *palmarum* or *oberholseri*, it may be deduced that it will prove to be paler and not darker like *occultum*; tail shorter.

Range.—From Moctum on Mt. Zempoaltepec, Oaxaca, Mexico south to Palenque, Chiapas.

Specimens examined.—*rarum*: the type and one other male from Panama; also one male from Costa Rica—all three in the Mus. of Comp. Zoology; *occultum*: 1 ♀ (type) and 1 ♂ in Moore Col. from Moctum, Oaxaca and Palenque, Chiapas respectively; *griseiceps*: 3 specs. in the M. C. Z. from Honduras in the gray phase with four tail bars and two in the intermediate phase with three tail bars, all marked *griseiceps*; *griscomi*: 5 specs. in Moore Col. from two localities, one in Morelos and the other on the Río Balsas in extreme northern Guerrero; also 2 specs. in the M. C. Z. from Omilteme and Chilpancingo in southern Guerrero, marked *palmarum*, but which are closer to the grayer *griscomi*; *palmarum*: the Type in the U. S. Nat. Mus. from Nayarit, also 4 specs. in Moore Col. from Nayarit and 3 intergrades between *palmarum* and *oberholseri* from

extreme southern Sinaloa. In addition I have inspected the large series of *gnoma* in the Moore Col. from various parts of Mexico and many others in American museums; also 5 specs. of *oberholseri* in Moore Col.

Remarks.—*Occultum* is known only from the adult female type from eastern Oaxaca and the adult male from Palenque on the Atlantic slope of Chiapas, both localities more humid than the Arid Tropical habitat along the Rio Balsas of its geographically nearest relative, *griscomi*.

These two individuals are almost identical in coloration and both in the intermediate phase. They belong to the southern of the two groups, into which *Glaucidium minutissimum* is divided by criteria, which a decade ago would have excluded them from being deemed conspecific. The southern group (*minutissimum*, *rarum*, *griseiceps* and *occultum*) ranging from South America through Panama to Oaxaca have (1) proportionately shorter tails; (2) tail-bars 3 in the intermediate phase of *rarum*, *griseiceps* and *occultum*, 4 in the gray phase of *griseiceps* and 4 or 5 in the South American *minutissimum*; (3) intermediate and rufescent phases predominating. The northern group (*griscomi*, *palmarum* and *oberholseri*) ranging from western Morelos and central Guerrero to Sinaloa have (1) proportionately longer tails; (2) tail-bars never 3, but 4 in both intermediate and gray phases (5 in type and one other *palmarum*); (3) rufescent phase lacking, while the gray phase predominates over the intermediate in the ratio of 5 to 1. It must be remembered it is customary in this genus, when counting tail-bars, to eliminate the one on the tip (generally worn away) and the vestigial one at the extreme base of the rectrices. The number of tail-bars is not a phase character, because 19 individuals of the northern group in both gray and intermediate phases possess 4 tail-bars.

Average Measurements in Millimeters of Males

	<i>Wing</i>	<i>Tail</i>
4 <i>oberholseri</i>	81.1 (80.5-82)	50.6 (48.6-53.1)
6 <i>palmarum</i>	81.9 (80.-84.1)	53.6 (52.3-55.9)
5 <i>griscomi</i>	85.6 (84.2-88.1)	56.2 (54.1-57.5)
1 <i>occultum</i>	85.9	49.8
1 <i>griseiceps</i>	84.2	43.6
3 <i>rarum</i>	98.7 (86.9-92.)	48. (46.-51.2)

From the Central Plateau we have received 8 specimens of *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*. Two females from Rancho Orozco, 8 miles south of Cuatro Ciénegas, Coahuila (Nov. 14) and one December female from Chareo Redondo, Jalisco, are typical migrants of the so-called hoary phase of the nominate race, formerly known as *nitidus*. But five breeding birds from the central portion of the great Plateau (one a parent male taken with a young bird just out of the nest, another a female containing large eggs, and the rest with sex organs much enlarged) represent a new race—the darkest race yet discovered, remarkably contrasted with the hoary phase *nitidus* and even darker than true *nuttallii*. It is herewith described:

***Phalaenoptilus nuttallii centralis* subsp. nov.**

Central Plateau Poorwill

Type.—Adult male, parent of young bird just out of nest, number 23428, collection of Robert T. Moore; Puerta de Guadalupe, 5 miles west of Ibarra, Guanajuato, Mexico; altitude about 7200 ft.; collected by Chester C. Lamb.

Subspecific characters.—Nearest to *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii californicus*, but (1) back darker brown (not reddish as in *adustus* of Arizona); (2) hastate black marks of tertials smaller; (3) brown bars on the black breast much thicker; (4) abdomen paler. Compared with true *nuttallii* of Colorado it is darker than even the dark phase; compared with *adustus* of Arizona it is obviously less reddish in the brown of the back; compared with *dickeyii* of Baja California it is conspicuously darker and still more so than the exceedingly pale *hueyi* of the Colorado River delta.

Range.—Ranges at least from Charco Redondo, Jalisco, in the south, northeast to Puerta de Guadalupe, Guanajuato and north to Nombre de Dios and Rio Mezquitál 12 miles northeast of Durango City, the two last collecting stations being in the state of Durango.

Measurements.—These do not show any trenchment differences from *californicus*, but are larger than those given for *dickeyi* by its describer.

Specimens examined—*centralis*: five specimens all in the Moore collection: Durango—Rio Mezquitál 2 males; Nombre de Dios 1 male; Guanajuato—Puerta de Guadalupe 1 male (Type); Jalisco—Charco Redondo, 20 miles west of Ojuelos 1 female. All five were collected between the dates, May 13 and June 1. Also all the specimens of related races in the United States National Museum and the Museum of Comparative Zoology, where there are very large series of true *nuttallii* (also the so-called hoary phase, *nitidus*), *adustus* and *californicus*. In the latter museum are 4 specimens of *hueyi* and five of *dickeyi*.

Remarks.—The discovery of *centralis* extends the breeding range of *nuttallii* several hundred miles farther south than had been hitherto known. It is interesting that it is so much darker than any of the races geographically nearest to it.